

Menu Planning for the School Breakfast Program (SBP)

The information below helps menu planners meet the SBP meal pattern requirements and encourage student selections of reimbursable meals with offer versus serve (OVS).



MEAL PATTERN: All breakfast menus must meet minimum daily and weekly requirements. The minimum daily requirements for all grades include 1 ounce equivalent of grains, 1 cup of fruits, and 1 cup of low-fat unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored milk. The weekly maximums for grains are not required but should be used as a planning tool to offer balanced meals that meet the weekly dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For more information on the meal patterns, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for Five-day Weeks](#) and [Meal Patterns for Seven-day Weeks](#) Web pages and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Questions and Answers on the Final Rule](#).



MILK: Only low-fat (1%) unflavored and fat-free unflavored or flavored milk may be served. Schools must offer a variety of milk daily (at least two different choices of fat content or flavor). This also applies when implementing Breakfast in the Classroom and offering fruit smoothies made with milk. For information on crediting smoothies, see the CSDE's handout, [Crediting Smoothies](#).



FRUITS: The fruits component includes fresh, frozen (with or without added sugar), canned in light syrup, water, or juice, and dried. All fruits credit based on the actual volume served except dried fruit, which credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of fruit. If implementing OVS, best practice is to offer all fruits in ½-cup servings and allow students to choose up to two.



VEGETABLE SUBSTITUTIONS: Vegetables can be substituted for fruits. Starchy vegetables can only be offered if the weekly menu also includes at least 2 cups of nonstarchy vegetables. For information on the vegetable subgroups, see the CSDE's handout, [Vegetable Subgroups](#).



JUICE: Fruit and vegetable juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice. Fruit juice together with vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings. This includes all sources of 100 percent juice served during the week including frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits, and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies, and juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice, unless the canned fruit is drained. Schools can offer a variety of ½-cup servings of juice daily as part of assorted fruit choices at breakfast. However, students cannot select more than one juice under OVS. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Crediting Juice](#).



GRAINS: All grains must be whole grain-rich, i.e., the product contains at least 50 percent whole grains, any remaining grains are enriched, and any noncreditable grains are less than 2 percent (¼ ounce equivalent) of the product formula. Whole grain-rich foods include 100 percent whole grains, which are the most nutritious choices. For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, [Criteria for Whole Grain-rich Foods](#) and [Identifying Whole Grains](#).



MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE SUBSTITUTIONS: Schools may offer meat/meat alternates as grain substitutions if the daily breakfast menu includes at least one grain item (1 ounce equivalent). A 1-ounce equivalent serving of meat/meat alternates equals 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, 1 ounce of cheese (low-fat recommended), ¼ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes), ½ large egg, 2 tablespoons of nut butters, 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, ¼ cup of commercial tofu, ½ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt, and 1 ounce of alternate protein products (APP).



DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS: Menus must meet the weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. In addition, the nutrition label or manufacturer specifications for all foods and ingredients used in school meals must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. Be aware of product nutrition information and limit noncreditable foods. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Noncreditable Foods](#).

Menu Planning for the SBP, continued



OFFER VERSUS SERVE (OVS): Schools must offer a minimum of four food items from the three food components, including two grains (or one grain and one meat/meat alternate substitution), one fruit and one milk, or one grain, two fruits, and one milk. The fourth food item cannot be another serving of milk. For a reimbursable meal, students must select at least three items including ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered) and the minimum required serving size of at least two other food items. Menu planners can choose to count products with more than 1 ounce equivalent of grains (or meat/meat alternate substitutions) as more than one food item if the additional amount provides the full ounce equivalent. For example, a 2-ounce bagel can credit as two grain items. To count as a food item under OVS, students must take at least the daily minimum required by the meal pattern except for the fruits component, which must be at least ½ cup. Amounts less than the minimum serving do not count as a food item for OVS. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Offer versus Serve in the SBP](#).



OFFERING VARIETY: There is a difference between variety and the number of items that students can select. When schools offer a variety of choices with OVS, students must be allowed to decline one of the four offered items. The language used on school menus and signs indicates whether choices are allowed. Use “or” to differentiate between item choices such as “*choose one: bagel or cereal and graham crackers.*” To offer variety, provide different choices and specify the number of items students can select.

| FRUIT VARIETY |
|--|
| Choose 2 fruits OR 1 fruit and 1 juice |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ cup of peaches• ½ cup strawberries• ½ cup of cantaloupe• ½ cup of assorted fruit juices |

| MILK VARIETY |
|---|
| Choose One: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low-fat milk• Fat-free milk• Fat-free chocolate milk• Fat-free strawberry milk |



SIGNAGE AND COMMUNICATION: Schools must identify all foods that are part of reimbursable meals near or at the beginning of all serving lines. For example, if fruits are offered in ½-cup portions, the serving line signage must indicate that students can select two choices. To ensure clear communication with students and staff about the meal pattern and OVS, schools must:

- post daily breakfast menus in all schools that clearly communicate all menu choices and what students are allowed to select; and
- provide adequate training for school food service staff on the breakfast meal pattern, including how to count food items and recognize reimbursable breakfasts.



CONSISTENCY: Menu planners determine how menu items credit toward the SBP meal pattern. Be consistent with serving sizes and crediting of food items. Plan menus so it is easy for students to select reimbursable meals under OVS, and easy for food service staff to identify reimbursable meals at the point of service. For example, if meat/meat alternates are used as grain substitutions, menu planners can choose to count them as either a grain or an extra food. Choose one option and count these foods the same way for all menus.



For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#) and [Meal Patterns](#) and [Crediting Foods](#) Web pages or contact the [school nutrition programs](#) staff in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

This handout is available at www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/sbp/mpsbp.pdf

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